

Council/Committee:	Council
Report Title	Member's Question Time
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The following written questions have been received:-

6(a) From Councillor William Gill to the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community

What actions can the cabinet member for community safety communicate to show women and girls across our borough that in the wake of vile racist thuggery in Oldbury last month, we are supporting and protecting their safety?

6(b) From Councillor Parbinder Kaur to the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community

The recent events in Smethwick, where offensive graffiti has been found on the Guru Nanak Gurdwara Smethwick, Holy Trinity Church and even a road sign, have caused deep concern across the community. The graffiti included swastikas and references to extremist groups such as the BNP and NF.

Acts of hate crime have no place in our borough. This graffiti is not only deeply offensive and intimidating but also risks undermining the community cohesion we are proud of in Sandwell's diverse borough.

Can the Cabinet Member please outline:

1. What action is being taken to work with communities who are been effected with graffiti on their buildings.
2. How is the Council working with the Police to ensure these incidents are treated as potential hate crimes?
3. What longer-term steps are being taken to reassure residents and prevent repeated targeting of community and faith settings?

6(c) From Councillor Richard Jeffcoat to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Infrastructure

Many residents of Tipton lament the loss of high-street banks. Some are not equipped to bank digitally, many prefer a cash economy, and there are local businesses that work in cash and require over-the-counter services. Residents tell me that they miss the personal touch when discussing their finances, whether savings, mortgages, or inheritance issues.

Banking Hubs are shared community spaces for banking services, run by the Post Office. They provide a counter service for basic transactions, and offer private spaces for customers to meet with staff from major banks for more complex issues. These hubs are often set up in areas where branches have closed, and they are funded by banks. One bank might have a presence on a specific day of the week, with another bank on another day, so that residents' needs are met.

Can I therefore ask the Cabinet Member for Regeneration to consider a piece of work to establish the public interest in a Banking Hub in each of our six towns. For example, the Regeneration and Growth service could consider where and how these hubs might best be located, bringing more footfall to our high streets: a modern version of an element of every-day life which is nearly lost.

6(d) From Councillor Amrita Dunn to the Cabinet Member for Housing

Given that I previously raised the need for additional HMO licensing in Sandwell and that the borough-wide scheme came into force on 1 October 2024, can the Cabinet Member for Housing & Regeneration outline what measurable improvements have been recorded so far in Tividale Ward — including the number of licences issued, enforcement actions taken, and any evidence of reduced overcrowding or anti-social behaviour — and how the Council intends to evaluate the scheme's overall effectiveness across the borough?

6(e) From Councillor Justyna Kordala to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Infrastructure

The Council's regeneration strategy rightly highlights multi-billion-pound projects in West Bromwich and Smethwick, but Sandwell has six towns. With persistent gaps in income, health and opportunity between wards.

What actions is the Council taking to ensure that regeneration funding and skills investment are distributed fairly across all our towns and what mechanisms will councillors have to scrutinise that distribution?

6(f) From Councillor Les Trumpeter to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways

Could the Cabinet Member for Environment outline what action the Council is taking to tackle persistent fly-tipping along Wigmore Lane in Charlemont Ward? This has been a long-standing issue for residents, compounded by the road being poorly lit. Has consideration been given to installing lighting or CCTV in this location to help deter offenders and support enforcement action?

6(g) From Councillor Natalie Weston to the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community

Could the Cabinet Member for Communities provide an update on what action is being taken to address ongoing drug dealing and associated anti-social behaviour along Beaconview Road in Charlemont Ward? Residents have raised repeated concerns about the impact on community safety — can the Cabinet Member confirm whether joint operations with West Midlands Police or additional community safety measures are being planned to tackle this issue?